

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)

Monday, July 10, 2017

Alabama Industrial Development Training Center

The AIACC met on Monday, July 10, 2017, at the Alabama Industrial Development Training Center. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Senator Cam Ward. Also in attendance were Council members: Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Robert Caldwell, Greg Carlson, Suzanne Dowling, Megan Everett, Doris Hill, Melanie Jones, Whitney Meade, Sarah Ryan, Todd Tomerlin, and Karen Willis, and Anna McConnell, State Autism Coordinator. The following proxies were in attendance as well: Russell Green on behalf of Stephanie Azar, Courtney Tarver on behalf of Lynn Beshear, Elizabeth Griffith on behalf of Fred Biasini, Vera Hendrix on behalf of John Mascia, Laurie Eldridge-Auffant on behalf of Thomas Miller, Justin Schwartz on behalf of Myriam Peralta, and Dallas Rabig in behalf of Jeana Ross.

The minutes from the April 10, 2017 meeting were approved and adopted.

Senator Ward provided a legislative update regarding HB284. Representative Patterson sponsored the bill, gaining final passage. There is an age cap of 18 on the bill, but in coming years there could be work done to remove that cap. Other states have a lower age cap (Georgia caps at age 6), so the 18-year-old starting point is positive. Senator Ward also cautioned the Council and advocates to be vigilant in implementation – regarding state implementation and services delivered through Medicaid, especially through ALLKids and CHIP. Legislators and advocates are closely monitoring the national healthcare discussion. If funding for healthcare decreases on the national level, it must increase at the state level. Alabama is not a rich state, so this will be difficult and cuts will need to be made. State and Public Education Employees Insurance programs being included in the bill was a positive addition, as it was not originally anticipated.

Senator Ward also noted that Regional Autism Network (RAN) funding was initiated during the 2016 session and continued in the 2017 session to expand to five RAN sites, allowing statewide coverage. The original legislation was passed in 2009, the same year that the Autism Council was formed. The goal for coming legislative sessions is to expand funding for RANs, as the services that these university and community partnerships offer will help toward meeting more needs of the autism community.

Senator Ward announced that Alabama Department of Mental Health has a new Commissioner, Lynn Beshear.

Anna McConnell announced that the 2016 Annual Report should be available online soon. Strategic Planning will occur in the fall, as the current Strategic Plan lasts from 2014-2017. Regional Autism Networks was a key focus of the current Strategic Plan. Immediately after the AIACC meeting, the Alabama Autism Provider Network meeting will occur in Room 107. The discussion will focus on implementation of HB284. The first portion of that meeting is open to the public.

Funding and Finance Committee: Greg Carlson encouraged attendees to note implementation timeline of insurance coverage based on HB284.

Implementation Timeline

<u>Coverage Type</u>	<u>Implementation Date</u>
Private Group Policies for employers with at least 51 employees	October 1, 2017
State Employees Health Insurance Plan	December 31, 2018
Public Education Employees Health Insurance Plan	December 31, 2018
Medicaid (ALLKids/CHIP)	December 31, 2018 (Funding must be allocated by legislature for this specific purpose.)

Age and Dollar Caps for all policies listed above EXCEPT MEDICAID

Birth – 9 years	\$40,000
10-13 years	\$30,000
14-18 years	\$20,000
19 and older	No coverage

In addition, Greg Carlson also announced that the Federal Employees Insurance Program began in January 2017, so the Committee will be looking at that implementation over time. There was \$3.25 million allocated from the Legislature for DMH intended for EPSDT/Medicaid use to comply with settlement negotiations with Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) and Center for Public Representation (CPR). ADAP and CPR stated that EPSDT services were not being provided. The original amount requested to address EPSDT was \$11 million, but that was reduced to \$3.25 million in conference committee. The \$11 was originally intended to be split between Mental Illness and Developmental Disabilities. Now that the funding has been reduced, there are questions as to how that money will be spent.

Courtney Tarver addressed the EPSDT funds. He said that it has not yet been determined how the \$3.25 million will be used. DMH has a new commissioner, Lynn Beshear, so discussions will need to be had with her and her team about next steps. There were three primary areas of emphasis – SED, ASD, and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. With the small amount of money, it won't have much impact if it is spread across three areas. ADAP and CPR are looking to in-home supports where possible.

Originally, \$6-6.5 million was requested for the MI side of things, and \$5 million to address ASD. Under the previous Governor's administration, there were plans to request an additional \$5 million to address developmental disabilities. There are no resolutions to date.

Greg Carlson discussed federal issues, for example capping Medicaid. We must wait to hear from federal decisions before state decisions and recommendations can be made.

Anna McConnell recommended attendees to look at the Behavior Analyst Licensing Board handout. Mark Williams said that Paige McKerchar has been working very hard on all the prep work for the board. Applications will be available very soon, although the timeline has been pushed back. Greg Carlson noted that there has been a lot of discussion about how to find the application. How to access those applications will be made available soon, as decisions are still being made. Anna McConnell also noted a "Frequently Asked Questions" document created by Autism Speaks that describes the various insurance options available.

Bama Hager noted that unlimited speech and occupational therapy is available is included in legislation for folks covered by legislation. Although HB284 does not cover every family in the state, it is a starting point. Many other states have much lower age caps and do not include educators and state employees. Once the law is passed, it should be easier to go to employers to ask for funding because a better infrastructure will be in place for ABA reimbursement.

Senator Ward noted that Medicaid funding is crucially important since it will up to funding Medicaid to provide those services. Without the funding, no matter if the law says it must be covered, Medicaid will be unable to provide those services. Senator Ward emphasized encouraging legislators to fund ABA therapy and like services in Medicaid.

Anna McConnell noted that Federal private insurance coverage was supposed to start January 1, 2017; however, the lack of licensure in Alabama is preventing credentialing from occurring, thereby preventing access to services. Greg Carlson said that for federal employees, there are many coverages employees can elect. Before you elect for a specific coverage, ensure that autism is truly covered. However, Anna noted that even in coverages that are tasked with providing ABA, they are not currently covering it due to licensure.

Regional Autism Networks: Anna presented documents with operational definitions pertaining to the Regional Autism Network and target areas for work in the coming fiscal year (RAN PowerPoint

attached). The RAN regional map will change October 2017 to match the Department of the Mental Health Developmental Disabilities regional map. Lizzie Griffith announced that UAB RAN has been preparing for a family training model. Vanderbilt's TRIAD program is a LEND site like UAB Sparks. TRIAD provides didactic programs based on needs of the area, and assists families in creating an action plan to take home. Sparks Clinics, Children's Behavioral Health, Children's Developmental Behavioral Clinic, and UAB's Pediatrics are partnering to implement trainings. Community partners will also be involved. Needs assessment materials have been gathered for Alabama and trainings will reflect results of those assessments. The plan is to move these trainings to being available statewide through the RAN at all sites. Development of IRB for a database for RAN (multisite to include all RAN sites) is beginning. A training at a DHR Supervisors training, as well as JBS Mental Health will be provided by UAB and AU RAN sites. MEGA conference will be attended by all sites for outreach to teachers, with a presentation on Friday. Doris Hill reported that she has been able to be more mobile and has had success with resource fairs and making community contacts. Doris presented for Alabama Parent Education Center, which has led to other presentation and partnership opportunities. A presentation was offered at the AL Transition Conference, as well as a respite event. A professional development opportunity was offered.

Public Awareness: Melanie Jones reported that ASA has helped Regions Bank officially become autism-friendly, and they are in 16 states. The *New York Times* did an article on the partnership. Continued efforts for sensory-friendly businesses is a priority. Sensory packets will be provided to community businesses wanting to become autism-friendly. Autism Society of Alabama also highlighted the Red Mountain Theatre is doing sensory-friendly showings. ASA is partnering with Project ECHO and serving on the UAB RAN Constituency Board.

Accountability: Anna McConnell reported that Standards of Practice will be collated and updated partnering with the UAB RAN. The number of national resources with those recommendations. Whitney Meade mentioned updating the assessment materials for who provides those services. Whitney also announced that UAH submitted a formal proposal to add a degree program for BCBA's.

Accessibility: Anna McConnell reported for Brooke Bowles regarding the Community Based Services Certification Training. The Certification Training is designed to provide: A better understanding of the positive impact Community-Based Services have on independent living skills, employment acquisition, and social skill development; The knowledge of how employment/school, home, relationships, and emotions work together; The understanding of how to develop individual service plans with measurable goals; The tools to develop and utilize a Support Team Model; and A sense of purpose and direction. Whitney Meade reported that Brooke's presentation on Core Values was impactful for

UAH graduate students as they look at ways to maintain and increase society's perceived value for people with disabilities.

Senator Ward noted that Paige McKerchar has carried the weight on bringing the BCBA Licensure Board to fruition for several years now.

Presentation by Dallas Rabin on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (presentation attached).

Member Updates:

Justin Schwartz announced that Project ECHO, a telementoring initiative, has already had two sessions with providers across the state. The target audience is the practitioners (general pediatricians, family medicine practitioners). Please encourage practitioners to be involved in this project. This model may be extended to several different opportunities.

Russell Green reported that Medicaid is projected to go live with the two remaining Regional Care Organizations (RCOs) on October 1. Those two are expected to be active throughout the entire state. RCO and fee-for-service model are both expected to be used.

Courtney Tarver reported for DMH that CMS Home and Community Based Setting rule, which enforces including individuals in most integrated settings, had an initial deadline of 5 years from March 2014. The deadline has been pushed back three more years (fully compliant requirement is March 2022). Final approval of statewide transition plan is due on original deadline date. DMH's DD division has submitted to Medicaid amendments to the ID and LAH waivers, particularly service definition upgrades to serve in most integrated setting. Some rate changes may also occur. Another amendment might come next year as well. Public comment will be open on those two waivers soon. Once Medicaid approves those waivers, a new waiver will be developed based on employment for transitional youth, although not exclusively, with inclusion of employment supports. It is hoped that after the new fiscal year, that waiver will be out for public comment and submission to CMS. This employment waiver must be offered to those on existing waiver lists, but once that opportunity has been made available, the plan is to shift this waiver to include people with developmental disabilities, which will include autism. This might be the first move toward a broad-based DD waiver. There will be around 200 slots to get it started. Once cost effectiveness is proven, the waiver could grow. Discussions are ongoing with ADAP, CPR, the Governor's Office, DHR, and Medicaid about meeting EPSDT obligations.

Robert Caldwell announced that he participated in advocacy regarding insurance reform and has been involved in other advocacy opportunities throughout the state. Robert is also involved in People First, which has been working on affordable housing and resistance to Medicaid cuts. He also announced the Tri-State Autism Symposium, and that he is working with Dustin Chandler for first responder training.

Laurie Eldridge-Auffant announced ADPH's Dr. Tom Miller will be retiring. A disability and health grant was funded for a 2nd year. The first project was a partnership with ALSDE for best practice for adaptive PE task force because assessments showed PE teachers were continuing to have trouble putting practices into place even after training. PE teachers reported more than any other disability that they needed help working with children with autism (elopement, behavior issues). Statewide training currently ongoing.

Vera Hendrix of AIDB reported that Lizzie Griffith from UAB RAN was a speaker for their teachers and service providers for deaf and blind on strategies to serve those with ASD.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, October 16, 2017

Recording Secretary

A. McConnell